

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 19, 2006 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. Claims 17, 28, 29, 31, 32, 36, 38, 39, 41 and 42 are amended and claims 27 and 37 are cancelled by the present Amendment. Support for these amendments can be found in the specification and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added. Claims 18-26 and 33 were withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner in view of an earlier restriction requirement. Accordingly, claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are pending in this application, and claims 17 and 36 are in independent form.

Claim Objections

Claims 17, 27-32 and 34-44 stand objected to for informalities. Specifically, the Examiner has objected to claims 17 and 36 because the Examiner believes that the language, "a longitudinally slit, cylindrical sleeve" is unclear. The Examiner has also objected to claims 17 and 36 because the recitation "the sleeve mount provided in a coupling of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions" is claiming intended use and not positively narrowing the structural features. Finally, the Examiner has objected to claims 27 and 37 because the Examiner believes that these claims include subject matter that lacks proper antecedent basis in the Applicant's specification.

The Applicant believes that the above amendments to the claims overcome the Examiner's informality objections. Regarding the objections to claims 27 and 37, support for the language in these claims can be specifically found in Fig. 7 of the Applicant's specification. Fig. 7 illustrates a sleeve mount (30) with mount parts (23 and 25) having flanges (24 and 26), a sleeve (20) having an axial slit (21), and a securing plate (31).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of these objections are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

Claims 17, 27, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,666,586 to Wu et al. (hereinafter "the Wu patent"). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

As defined by independent claim 17, the present invention is directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing a cylindrical sleeve having an axial slit. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount and are restricted to the central part of the sleeve mount, the sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts and the means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

As defined by independent claim 36, the present invention is also directed to a sleeve mount comprising an interior for accommodating and securing a cylindrical sleeve having an axial slit. The sleeve is provided in an adapter of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions. The sleeve mount has means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis. The means for securing are arranged in a central part of the sleeve mount and are restricted to the central part of the sleeve mount. The means for securing are also designed to engage in the axial slit of the cylindrical sleeve. The sleeve mount is made up of two separate mount parts. The means for securing are arranged and retained between the mount parts.

The Wu patent discloses an optic adapter that connects first and second optic fibers in an aligned but spaced fashion for attenuation of optic signals traveling between the optic fibers. The optic adapter (100) includes a two-part sleeve mount (30 and 40) as shown in Figs. 5 and 13 for accommodating a cylindrical sleeve (20). The cylindrical sleeve (20) is provided in the adapter (100) of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter.

The Wu patent does not teach or suggest a means for securing the sleeve against rotation about a sleeve axis as required by independent claims 17 and 36. Although the sleeve mount (30, 40) itself is secured against rotation about its longitudinal axis in an outer housing (10) by means of a coupling ring (70), the cylindrical sleeve (20) is not secured in such a manner. As is clearly described at column 4, lines 8-12 of the Wu patent, the coupling ring (70) has an inwardly extending tab (71) that is slidably received in an axially-

extending groove (41) defined in the cylinder (40) whereby the coupling ring (70) is axially movable along the groove (41) of the cylinder (40). The Wu patent does not teach or suggest that the coupling ring (70) or the inwardly extending tab (71) thereof interact with cylindrical sleeve (20) to prevent rotation of the sleeve (20). Furthermore, the cross-sectional view of the adaptor (100) of the Wu patent provided in Fig. 13 clearly illustrates that the coupling ring (70) does not interact with the sleeve (20) to prevent rotation of the sleeve (20). Instead, the coupling ring (70) interacts with cylinder (40) in groove (41).

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes that the subject matter of amended independent claims 17 and 36 is not anticipated by the Wu patent. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 17 and 36 is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over the Wu patent in view of Japanese Patent Application Publication No. JP 05-034549 to Ishikawa et al. (hereinafter "the Ishikawa application") and United States Patent No. 6,347,888 to Puetz (hereinafter "the Puetz patent"). In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

Claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 depend from and add further limitations to amended independent claims 17 and 36.

The Wu patent was discussed hereinabove in connection with amended independent claims 17 and 36.

The Puetz patent is directed to a fiber optic adapter with a hybrid connection system, and is provided by the Examiner as a teaching of a connector with two flanges that abut against one another. The Puetz patent fails to cure the deficiencies of the Wu patent. The adapter of the Puetz patent includes a two-part sleeve mount (128, 148 in Fig. 3) for accommodating a cylindrical sleeve (140) with an axial slot (142). The cylindrical sleeve (140) is provided in the adapter (100) of an optical plug-in connection for accommodating ferrules of two optical plug-in connectors introduced from opposite directions into the adapter. However, the "inner" cylindrical sleeve (140) is not secured against rotation about its

longitudinal axis by a means for securing. Accordingly, the Puetz patent does not cure the deficiencies of the Wu patent as discussed hereinabove.

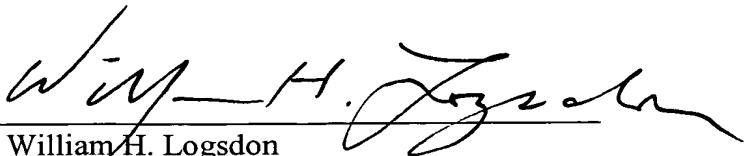
The Ishikawa application is directed to an optical connector and is provided by the Examiner as a teaching of a connector having a securing plate retained in a rotationally secure manner and engaging in the slit of the slit sleeve by way of a protuberance. The optical connector of the Ishikawa patent includes a sleeve that is held in a ring-like housing (2) (see Fig. 1) which as a whole is contained in an adapter. The Ishikawa application does not teach or suggest that the ring-like housing has two separate parts as required by the Wu patent and the Puetz patent and is therefore contradictory to these references. Furthermore, the Ishikawa application fails to cure the deficiencies of the Wu patent because the Ishikawa patent does not teach or suggest a two-part sleeve mount with a means for securing a sleeve against rotation.

Therefore, claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 are believed to be patentable for the reasons discussed hereinabove in connection with amended independent claims 17 and 36. Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 28-32, 34, 35 and 38-44 is respectfully requested.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of pending claims 17, 28-32, 34-36 and 38-44 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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